

INSPECTION REPORT

BECKERMET CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Beckermest

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112345

Headteacher: Mrs T Eyre

Lead inspector: Mr J J Peacock

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 25th March 2004

Inspection number: 255462

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	89
School address:	Mill Lane Beckermest Cumbria
Postcode:	CA21 2YD
Telephone number:	01946 841221
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Robert Jones

Date of previous inspection: June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This smaller than average primary school is situated in an attractive village and it serves a wide rural area. Numbers increased after the previous inspection and a fourth class was added. However, this is proving costly to maintain as numbers have fallen slightly. About a quarter of the pupils travel to school from out of the immediate area. There are 89 pupils on roll, 51 boys and 38 girls and all, except those in Year 2, are in mixed-age classes. There are no children from ethnic minority backgrounds or any who speak English as an additional language. The attainment of most children on entry to the school is typical with the full range of abilities represented.

The number eligible for free school meals, 2.3 per cent, is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is below the national average with 14.6 per cent on the register and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school provides for most pupils from its own resources but additional help has been sought from specialists for a few pupils with moderate learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural problems. The mobility of pupils is more significant in some years than others and is closely linked to fluctuations in the workforce at the nearby Sellafield Nuclear Plant. Last year 2 joined and 5 left the school during term time.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25344	Mr J J Peacock	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage
			Special educational needs
			English as an additional language
			Mathematics
			Science
			Physical education
9511	Mrs A Longfield	Lay inspector	
29180	Mrs G Ulyatt	Team inspector	English
			Information and communication technology
			Art and design
			Design and technology
			Geography
			History
			Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school, which takes good care of its pupils and in a close partnership with parents, provides a learning environment in which they can thrive. As a result, most achieve well. The headteacher is deeply committed to raising standards and leads by example, taking on a heavy teaching commitment as well as managing the school. Her considerable efforts have been instrumental in creating the very good ethos for learning. The very good leadership of the headteacher and the sustained efforts of the effective governing body are largely responsible for the steady rate of improvement. Pupils enjoy coming to school and they benefit greatly from the good start they are given in their reception year. However, the quality of teaching varies in the other three classes from very good to satisfactory. Overall, the school is providing good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher, supported by the effective governing body are key elements in the school's continuing development.
- Standards in reading are well above average thanks in part to the efforts of parents at home.
- Children get a good start in the reception class. The provision for their personal development is very good.
- The quality of teaching is not as effective in Years 2, 3 and 4 as teachers have lower expectations of what pupils can do and there is a lack of challenge for pupils in some lessons.
- Very strong parental interest and support are key features, which ensure that pupils achieve so well. Parents make a significant contribution towards school funding and help to keep attendance rates at well above average.
- The school, backed by parents, is outstanding in stimulating in pupils a desire to learn.
- Pupils respond very well to the extremely positive atmosphere for learning. They have very good attitudes towards work and behave very well. This has a significant impact on how well they do in school.

The level of improvement from the previous inspection has been good. The extremely hard working headteacher has had a substantial impact on improving many aspects of teaching and learning and management. Most of the six previous key issues have been successfully corrected with the biggest improvements happening in curriculum planning, which is based on the latest national guidance and in raising standards in English. Effective procedures have recently been introduced to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science but they do not include other subjects at present.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	C	A	A
mathematics	D	C	E	E
science	C	C	C	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Achievement is good overall, with most pupils making good progress to reach the standards expected in the national tests by Year 6. However, the relatively small numbers tested and the effect of just one pupils' performance on overall standards means that the results in the table above should be treated with some caution. In mathematics, for example, the disappointing performance was due to a small group of four pupils, some with special educational needs who narrowly failed to achieve the expected Level 4. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6 are

attaining above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils throughout attain well above average standards in reading and by Year 6, pupils also do well in history where standards are above those normally seen. The progress all pupils make is adversely affected in some lessons because of the lack of sufficiently challenging work. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with those expected throughout. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards in other subjects or to confirm the strength reported previously in art and design. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good due to the effective support they receive. Most children in the Foundation Stage achieve the early learning targets in all six areas of their curriculum before the end of their reception year because of the good provision for them.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. School assemblies and opportunities to discuss a range of social and moral issues in special lessons enhance the provision significantly and reflect the Christian values and beliefs of the school very well. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility and they very willingly embrace these. Most show a high degree of self-confidence and enjoy a very good relationship with staff. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to school and attendance is well above average. As a result, all achieve well despite teaching being undemanding in some lessons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall. The relatively small classes with interested and very well behaved pupils and supportive parents means that the climate for learning is very good. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage capitalizes on this and is consistently good, with the teacher and highly effective and conscientious senior teaching assistant working well as a team. This ensures that most children make good progress. However, the quality of teaching and learning varies from mostly very good with Year 5 and 6 pupils through to mostly satisfactory elsewhere. On one occasion, teaching was unsatisfactory. The key elements responsible are some teachers' low expectations of what pupils can do and work in lessons which is not sufficiently challenging for average and higher ability pupils. The scrutiny of work and assessment records show a dip in pupils' performance in the middle of the school as a result. The assessment of pupils learning is good throughout. The school has a very successful partnership with its parents and homework is used very well to extend pupils learning. The staff provide pupils with a good level of care, support and guidance.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is well led and managed. The quality of leadership by the headteacher is very good. Governance is good. All statutory requirements are met. The headteacher and governors are deeply committed to improvement and use their considerable skills to good effect, fulfilling their roles well. Under the exceptional leadership of the dedicated and very knowledgeable headteacher, the school has a clear understanding of how well it is doing and what it needs to do better. Governors are keenly interested in developing the school and fully support the headteacher and her staff. The principles of best value are applied to all areas.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have very positive views about the school. Children enjoy school and feel their views are taken into account. Parental confidence in the school is high; they have a great trust in and regard for the headteacher's leadership. Some would like more information on pupils' progress. Inspectors think the school is doing well on this aspect. Some pupils questioned whether others behaved as well as they should. Most behave very well.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are to:

- Ensure that teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are appropriate and sufficiently challenging to maintain their interest in all lessons.
- Rigorously monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in order to make it more consistently good throughout.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, pupils' level of achievement is good. Most children enter the school with broadly average levels of attainment and due to the quality of provision, most achieve the learning targets set for them before the end of their reception year. By the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, all pupils have made good progress in relation to their prior attainment with overall standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science being above average. This represents a significant improvement from the previous inspection, particularly in English where standards were below average for Year 6. Overall, standards by Year 6 are rising in line with the national trend for improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The rate of progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs is good.
- In the national tests in 2003, Year 6 pupils did very well in English and Year 2 pupils did very well in reading, attaining standards which were well above average.
- Pupils work hard and produce a good amount of work in most subjects. In English, written work is sometimes untidy.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in all areas of their curriculum. They achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average throughout and also in history by Year 6.
- Standards in reading are well above average in all classes thanks in part to the encouragement and support of parents.
- Pupils' progress is adversely affected in some lessons because the work set for them is not sufficiently challenging.

Commentary

1 In the previous inspection, provision in the Foundation Stage was described as a strength of the school. It remains a strong area. The consistently good quality of teaching ensures that all children quickly settle into school and make good progress. Most are expected to attain the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning which make up the Foundation Stage curriculum, before the end of their reception year. The calm, caring approach of the very talented class teacher helps to quickly establish very good relationships and this gives all the children confidence. She is supported exceptionally well by the extremely conscientious teaching assistant. Together, they make a very effective team. In the relatively small year group, all children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Having some older Year 1 pupils in the same class is an added benefit as the children often work together and this gives the younger ones confidence.

2 The school's overall performance in the national tests for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils varies significantly from year to year. This is caused by the small numbers and the effect one pupil can have on the overall performance. Consequently, the overall results should be treated with some caution. In 2003, only 12 pupils in Year 2 did the tests. They did very well in reading, attaining well above average standards compared to all schools and compared to pupils in similar schools. Standards in writing and mathematics were above average. In the teacher assessments in science, their performance was in the top five per cent nationally for pupils attaining the higher than expected Level 3. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average in English, mathematics and science with every pupil attaining the expected level and about a third achieving the higher Level 3.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.2 (15.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.8 (13.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.2 (18.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3 In the national tests for Year 6 in 2003, the school's overall performance compared to all schools nationally was well above average in English, well below average in mathematics and average in science. The comparisons with similar schools are the same for English and mathematics but rather better at above average for science. Detailed school records show that individual pupils made good progress to achieve well in all three subjects. The weaker performance in mathematics was due to four pupils, some with special educational needs just failing to achieve the expected level. The targets for English and mathematics in 2004 are 100 per cent reaching expected the levels with about a third expected to achieve the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics and 40 per cent in science. Pupils produce a lot of work in all three subjects. The quality of written work is sometimes untidy, particularly in English. The school has identified this as an area for improvement and has introduced a handwriting scheme for all pupils to follow. The trend in the school's results over time is in line with the national trend for improvement.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.5 (27.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.5 (27.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.3 (29.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4 Pupils make particularly good progress in the core subjects through Years 5 and 6, thanks largely to the high incidence of very good teaching. Additionally, all pupils have a very good attitude to their learning and most behave in a mature and sensible manner. Pupils' progress in some of the lessons seen lower down the school was not as good as it could have been because teachers' expectations were not high enough and work was too easy for many pupils. Nearly every parent who responded to the questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection agreed that staff expect pupils to work hard. However, some had reservations about the quality of work that their children were expected to do in some classes. The above average standards in lessons and in the national tests are due to a combination of factors which all contribute to the school's good reputation in the area. These factors are;

- the determination and drive of the headteacher to raise standards;
- the very good quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6;
- pupils' very positive attitudes and their very good behaviour;
- strong parental interest and support.

There was no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys in the national tests in 2003. Detailed tracking records show all pupils made good progress in relation to their prior attainment level.

5 In history, standards in Year 2 are in line with those expected but by the end of Year 6, they are above those normally seen. An extensive amount of work was available in history, showing that this is a well taught subject. Standards in ICT are in line with those expected in Years 2 and 6. Pupils have good access to computers and two classes already have the new computer linked whiteboards which they are using well. More computers and resources are to be added to further improve pupils' access to modern technology. Standards are undoubtedly rising due to the

developing staff expertise and the efforts of the knowledgeable subject co-ordinator. Inspectors saw that computers were used extensively to support learning in most subjects.

6 There was insufficient evidence for inspectors to make a reliable judgement about standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, music or physical education in either Year 2 or Year 6. Only one art and design lesson was seen, for example, and although there was some completed work to analyse, it was not enough to confirm the well above average standards reported in the previous inspection. The small size of the school has a limiting effect on what pupils can do in physical education, as there is no space for large apparatus or climbing frames. There was insufficient evidence to ascertain if this was having any impact on standards. The school already has plans to improve the available space and resources.

7 Great care is taken to ensure that pupils with special educational needs take a full part in all lessons. The quality of teachers' planning ensures that they have suitably challenging work and teaching assistants give valuable support in many lessons. In the closing discussions at the end of lessons, these pupils are encouraged, along with the rest of the class to confidently demonstrate the good progress that they have made. Care is taken to incorporate pupils' specific targets for learning from their individual education plans in lesson planning. As a result, they achieve well. The school has some very able pupils and great care is taken to ensure that they are provided with additional work which is suitably challenging. A register is maintained for the highly gifted or pupils with special talents. None are currently identified but in the past, special tuition has been arranged for this very small number of pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Attendance and punctuality are very good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. This is largely due to the level of parental support and interest, allied to the good provision the school makes for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Bullying is not a problem at this school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good attendance and punctuality have a very strong impact on standards attained and on pupils' achievements.
- Very good attitudes to work and very good behaviour shows that pupils value their educational opportunities.
- The school is outstanding in the way it promotes very good relationships, self-confidence and self-esteem, an undercurrent of respect and knowledge of what is right and wrong.
- Pupils have very mature attitudes towards staff of the school, visitors and each other.

Commentary

8 The table below shows pupils' attendance in the most recent published year. Attendance is well above the figure for similar schools nationally. It is a reflection of parents' determination that their child gets the most out of their educational opportunities. It also reflects pupils' eagerness and willingness to come to school. It is rare that pupils come to school late. Regular attendance and good punctuality are hallmarks of Beckermets Primary School and significant factors in pupils' achievements.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (96.4%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.6	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

9 Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to schoolwork also contribute a great deal to their achievements. Both behaviour and attitudes are strongly positive and judged to be very good overall. Pupils' very good behaviour is reflected in the fact that it has not been necessary to exclude any pupil from school. This has been the case for many years. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes were identified as strengths of the school at the previous inspection and these strengths have been maintained. Because pupils relate very well to each other, their skills of co-operative working and of discussion and debate are well established, enhancing achievement across the school. In their response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in their comments about behaviour at their pre-inspection meeting, parents identified pupils' behaviour and positive attitudes as strengths of their child's learning. The inspection team agrees with them. Similarly, pupils believe that they learn effectively and are sensibly behaved, although a small number think 'other children' are less well behaved at times. The strengths identified in this area during the inspection confirm parental views about behaviour, attitudes and the development of pupils' values. There are no signs of bullying, harassment or racist attitudes in the school. The school very effectively involves parents and pupils in resolving successfully any incidents.

10 Pupils bring to school a good range of well-established personal and social skills acquired through their home life. The school has good arrangements to capitalise on this and makes good provision to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils get good opportunities for reflection and for the appreciation of art, poetry and music. There is a very well established code of conduct that gives them insight into what is right and wrong and how to be good members of the school community. The curriculum provides them with good opportunities to work together in pairs and teams, enhancing their social interaction. It also provides many opportunities to listen with interest to visitors to school and appreciate the rich culture around them through visits to local places of interest to enhance learning in art and design, technology, history, geography and science. There are good opportunities for learning to respect the ethnic beliefs and culture of those in countries overseas. For example, during the inspection, pupils were learning to work in the style of Aboriginal artists and listened to music from the rain forest. The maturity of pupils' attitudes towards their school life is clearly evident in those with the potential for higher attainment and in those who find learning difficult. Good strategies exist for supporting all pupils, keeping them fully motivated and positive about their life and work in school.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	89	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

11 The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good, overall. As a result, all pupils achieve well. Children in the Foundation Stage get a good start to their education because of the consistently good quality teaching in their reception year. There are very good links with other schools.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. The quality of teaching and learning varies from mostly very good with Year 5 and 6 pupils to mostly satisfactory in the other infant and junior class. Assessment procedures are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between pupils and their teachers result in a very positive atmosphere for learning throughout.

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do is a weakness in some lessons. As a result, some of the tasks set are not sufficiently challenging for average and higher attaining pupils.
- Teachers make very good use of homework to extend pupils learning. Parents are very supportive of their children in this.
- Teachers make very good use of the extremely conscientious teaching assistants and many parent volunteers.
- The quality of assessment of pupils' work is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of how they can improve.
- Pupils apply themselves well in lessons and usually produce lots of neat work.
- Some lessons end with insufficient time allowed to effectively review the learning objectives.

Commentary

12 The previous inspection in June 1998 highlighted a number of weaknesses in the quality of teaching such as teachers' planning, the use of homework, marking inconsistencies and assessment procedures. Since then there has been a determined effort by the headteacher and staff to improve these aspects, with good results. Homework, for example, is now used very well to support pupils' work in class. The overall quality of teaching has improved slightly with just over half of the lessons seen being good or better where before it was just under half.

13 The latest curriculum guidance has been adopted by the school and detailed schemes of work set out clearly learning for each year group. This helps teachers' lesson planning and they work closely together to ensure that pupils' learning is a continuous process. However, some teachers' expectations of what average and higher attaining pupils can achieve are not sufficiently demanding and these pupils often quickly finish the tasks set for them with ease. The exceptionally close and trusting relationships pupils have with their teachers in the smaller than average class sizes are a key factor in promoting a very good climate for learning in the school. Pupils in some lessons, however, do not make sufficient progress as the work set for them is far too easy. Pupils behave maturely and responsibly in lessons and can be allowed the freedom to work together in groups, often independently of their teacher. On a few occasions, pupils were so involved with their work that insufficient time was allowed by the teacher to end lessons with a review of the learning objectives. This meant that pupils were unable to share their experiences with others, helping to consolidate learning for all.

14 Six very good lessons were seen with almost all of these being with the older pupils in Years 5 and 6. Exceptionally detailed planning, well thought-out tasks, which successfully motivated and interested pupils and high expectations, coupled with excellent use of support staff and other adults in the classroom, ensured that pupils' full attention was guaranteed and as a result, learning was very effective. However, not all teachers plan their lessons with such meticulous attention to detail, or match work to the ability level of pupils to provide sufficient challenge for all. The biggest factor affecting the quality of teaching during this inspection was the lack of challenge for average and higher attaining pupils in a few lessons, resulting from teachers' low expectations of what pupils were capable of achieving. In one lesson seen, work for all pupils was set at a level that the lower attaining pupils could cope with. As a result, higher attaining pupils quickly finished it. Equality of opportunity is a key consideration for all staff and support or guidance is always on hand for any pupil who needs it.

15 All pupils make good use of computers to research facts about other countries in geography and use their writing skills to record information for history topics. Lessons are well organised and teachers make their expectations about behaviour clear. As a result, most pupils are keen to learn and behave impeccably in lessons. Pupils work hard and inspectors were able to make judgements about standards in subjects such as science and history from the amount of neatly produced work.

16 The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. All teachers agree the targets for their pupils with the special educational needs co-ordinator when individual educational plans are written. These targets, covering mostly literacy and numeracy skills and sometimes aspects such as concentration levels are checked carefully to make sure they are

relevant and sufficiently challenging. Care is taken to include these targets when planning pupils' work. This ensures that all pupils are fully included in lessons and that the tasks they are set are closely matched to their ability level. Very good use is made of specialist teachers and special attachment welfare assistants to support pupils with learning difficulties. On the occasions that pupils are taught individually or in a small group outside of the classroom, the close and caring relationships seem to bring the best out of them and work is usually of a good standard. Two pupils, for example, wrote a lengthy poem with support.

17 Children in reception benefit from the teaching of an experienced and skilful teacher and dedicated teaching assistant. Parent volunteers and students also add valuable support and substantially reduce the number of pupils in each group when they support the teacher. Children settle in quickly and make good progress in all areas of learning. Being in a relatively small class with some older Year 1 pupils is beneficial and as a result, children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Almost all of the teaching seen in the reception class was good or very good. This ensures that children will achieve the targets set for them in all six areas of their curriculum before they transfer to Year 1. The accommodation is imaginatively used to provide interesting areas such as the animal hospital which stimulate children's interest. The good range of resources is an added benefit. The outdoor area is sufficient in size for the number of pupils and is used most effectively for promoting learning in all six areas which make up the Foundation Stage curriculum. Good use is made of computers in this section of the school.

18 The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is undertaken regularly and in depth for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Results of assessments made of progress in pupils' termly work and their performance in the national tests are carefully analysed. Assessment information is used well to modify the planning for future work and to track progress from year-to-year. Specific learning targets are planned for pupils from the results of the detailed assessments, ensuring all pupils build progressively on their previous learning. These targets are communicated very well to individual pupils and their parents in order to involve them more and give a better understanding of what needs to be achieved. In the non-core subjects, assessment procedures are satisfactory. A detailed assessment is undertaken for some subjects such as music at the end of the year or at the end of each terms work for others such as history.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	7	10	1	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory and it provides adequately for all pupils. There is a good range of additional activities available outside the school day. The resources in school are adequate and the accommodation is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of sporting opportunities and opportunities for trips into the Lake District and residential visits are good.
- There have been improvements to curriculum plans since the previous inspection.
- The school has begun to adopt a cross-curricular approach to some subjects.
- Provision and resources for ICT are good.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good.
- Accommodation is good outdoors with spacious grounds and an adventure play area.
- The match of teachers to the curriculum is good.

Commentary

19 The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which caters for the needs of all pupils. There is a wide and varied range of activities for pupils outside the school day considering the size of the school. Visitors including the 'history man' and theatre groups inspire pupils. Pupils throughout the school go on regular visits to enhance their academic progress and their personal development. For example, they have visited Appleby-in-Westmorland to view the flood defences as part of a geographical study on rivers and Yottenfews at Sellafield for scientific enquiry. All pupils from Year 2 upwards participate in residential visits staying away from home for one night at first, and increasing these as they get older. Some staff and parents are qualified coaches and organise a good range of physical activities for pupils including, football, cricket, netball and orienteering.

20 The school has worked hard to develop and improve planning. Schemes of work have been improved since the last report and are used to support teaching and learning in all subjects. The use of literacy and numeracy strategies have resulted in improved standards in these subjects. The music scheme supports non-specialists well. Planning for ICT ensures that specific skills are taught throughout the school. The impact is evident in that provision is now at least satisfactory in all subjects.

21 Since the previous inspection the school has begun to adopt a cross curricular approach in the way some subjects are planned and taught. Many subject areas are now effectively linked. For example, in English, pupils study the diaries of Howard Carter and of Anne Frank. These are linked well with history topics on the Ancient Egyptians and World War II. Older pupils study the flooding of the Nile and its impact on Ancient Egyptian life. They make graphs using their numeracy and ICT skills showing how the height of the water changes during the year. In design and technology pupils in Year 2 make shakers to use in music lessons. They learn about Joseph's coat in religious education and sew one for him in design and technology.

22 The school has improved the quantity and quality of resources to support ICT. Each class has a number of computers so teachers can plan for a group of pupils to use computers to enhance their learning and supervise their activity at the same time. In design and technology lessons they use the computer to make patterns. In English a group write poetry; in history they research using the web site. The co-ordinator and headteacher are taking part in a county-wide pilot scheme for the Local Education Authority so two of the classes in the school have interactive white boards and the other two classes are due to receive theirs.

23 The accommodation is satisfactory overall and the area outdoors has had several recent improvements. Children in the Foundation Stage now benefit from a well resourced outdoor classroom. Older pupils grow a variety of vegetables in the school garden. The school hall has limitations as it is relatively small for physical education. However, there was insufficient evidence to judge any impact of this. Resources for all subjects are sufficient to support the work planned.

24 There are an appropriate number of qualified teachers and assistants to meet the demands of the curriculum. This is because many parents provide gift aid to the school to retain four classes. This means pupils benefit from being taught in small groups where they are well supported.

Care, guidance and support

The school ensures that pupils get a good level of care. Good support, advice and guidance are available because the school knows pupils' academic and social progress so well. The school has good procedures to involve pupils in its work. Pupils know that their opinion is listened to and valued and that where necessary, something will be done about their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are well prepared for introduction to school in the reception class and there are good arrangements for transfer of pupils from one year to another within the school.

- Teachers know their pupils very well in this small school setting. They are in a strong position to guide and support them through their school life.
- Good interaction between adults and pupils foster very good and trusting relationships.

Commentary

25 There is an ethos of care, order and structure, which is emphasised in the school's expectations of pupils' conduct and their response in the daily assemblies. The school has a suitable policy for child protection and all the staff are aware of their responsibilities. There are satisfactory health and safety procedures in place including good arrangements for administering first aid and dealing with accidents or sickness. Fire drills are carried out regularly. Teachers are conscientious of their supervision of pupils in their class.

26 The school's systems for caring for pupils are well established and work efficiently. Arrangements for admission to the reception classes are good, ensuring that children get off to a good start in their learning. There is good tracking of children's progress and this ensures that good information is available when they transfer into Year 1 and into subsequent year groups. The school's strategies for measuring progress and for listening to pupils are good. There are, for example, formal strategies for listening to pupils' views in personal, social and health education sessions, teachers are good at making informal occasions available to listen to pupils' interests, successes and concerns. This puts them in a very good position to make effective use of their accumulated information about individual pupils.

27 There are very good and trusting relationships between adults and pupils in the classroom and beyond it. This is equally true of relationships with lunchtime staff. As a result, pupils know that they will be listened to, that what they have to say is important and that they can rely on and trust the adults in the school. This effectively reinforces the warm, friendly, family atmosphere which exists in the school and gives pupils confidence. Good arrangements for the care and support of pupils with learning difficulties include effective strategies for identification of specific needs and the careful tracking of their progress.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are very strong. This is also the case for links with other schools and colleges and the wider community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents get good quality information about what is happening in school and about the progress being made by their child.
- Home and school links have a very strong effect on standards achieved, on the pupils' progress in learning, and on their progress in their social skills.
- Links with pre-school settings and the school to which most pupils transfer are strong and helpful.
- Very good relationships are maintained with other educational establishments.

Commentary

28 A very strong feature of the pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting for parents prior to the inspection was the confidence and trust placed in the school by the vast majority of parents. A measure of parental confidence is the number who help in the classroom and who have signed Gift Aid agreements. Parents strongly believe that their children like school, make good progress and that leadership and management are good. Some had reservations about the quality of teaching in some classes in the school as they felt that their children were not being sufficiently challenged. Inspection evidence bears out these concerns about teaching in some lessons. Parents have regular opportunities to visit school formally to discuss their child's progress. Written reports are full and informative and there is a regular flow of information about what is coming up in the curriculum. Because there is a very strong and positive home and school link, pupils benefit a great deal. The

school is quick to support family values; the home gives strong support to learning through taking a keen interest in it. The impact is strong on both academic progress and on the development of social and personal skills. Children come to school ready to learn and the school capitalizes well on this. There are good relationships with parents of pupils who have learning difficulties. This ensures that these pupils are kept in touch with their learning and that parents have good information about their child's progress.

29 Very good arrangements are in place to work hand-in-hand with other schools and with pre-school settings in the best interests of the progress of pupils. Most children have had some pre-school experience before entering the reception classes. The reception staff have good relationships with these pre-school settings, so that they already know a great deal about children before they enter school. There are good relationships with the other primary schools in the 'Small Schools Cluster'. Good relationships also exist with the school to which most pupils' transfer.

30 There are very good links with the local community. Through the work of the Friends Association, in their social and very successful fund raising events, where an 'Auction of Promises' raised over £2,000, the school is seen as being at the heart of the village. The school football teams enjoyed their opportunity to play during the half time interval at a recent Carlisle United home game and the members of the school council at the Junior Council meeting at the civic hall.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. Key staff support the headteacher effectively. Management is affected by the headteachers heavy teaching commitment but is still good. Governance of the school is good. All statutory requirements are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for pupils' academic, welfare and personal development.
- Subject leadership is effective in English, mathematics and science but procedures to monitor the quality of teaching and learning need to be extended to cover all subjects.
- The governors are committed and dedicated to the school and play an active role in supporting its work.

Commentary

31 The headteacher has an impressively positive effect on the way the school operates. She has a very clear vision and high aspirations for all pupils. The headteacher is a very good role model. She creates an excellent ethos in her class and the climate for learning is very good with the pupils she teaches. The results of her hard work and dedication are very evident in the improved quality of teaching and of pupils' academic performance, welfare and personal development. Analysis of most aspects of the school's work is good and focuses well on appropriate priorities. Staff who are responsible for mathematics, English and science are effective in the work they do. They have been empowered through training and support to lead the school towards raising standards. They have examined strengths and weaknesses in the subjects through lesson observations and analysis of test results. Through action plans they have adopted strategies to address gaps in teaching and learning. As a result, pupils achieve well as they move through the school.

32 However, the school has not extended the good practice of monitoring core subjects to other curriculum areas. The gathering of information here is in its infancy. The school is clear about ways to self-evaluate, but there are no clear strategies in place to monitor foundation subjects so that gaps in teaching and learning can be identified and addressed. The school is aware of weaknesses in teaching in some classes because of the quality of pupils work, parental comments and evidence from tracking individual pupils performance, which clearly shows a dip in the middle of

the school. The headteacher has a high teaching commitment, therefore there has not been enough time allocated for her to lead staff to making improvements in provision in the subjects they lead.

33 The governors play an active part in the life of the school and are fully supportive of the headteacher and the staff. They have a great diversity of skills and challenge the school in what it plans to do to ensure that decisions benefit all users. They offer strong support to the headteacher. Governors have a very clear understanding of all aspects of the school's work. They never lose sight of the children they are appointed to serve. They expect teachers to encourage pupils to reach the highest goal possible but realise that their expectations must be reasonable. School spending decisions relate to priorities for improvement and benefit all pupils. For example, they have arranged regular monthly donations from parents so that the school can keep four full-time teachers in classes. They have been equally rigorous in making decisions about building improvements to provide an outdoor classroom for the reception classroom and to improve the quality of the school grounds.

34 All the key issues raised in the previous inspection have received much attention. As a result, the school has maintained its rate of improvement and is now an effective school. Taking account of the slightly below average costs per pupil, it is providing good value for money.

Financial information.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	258,497
Total expenditure	255,357
Expenditure per pupil	2,479

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	1,758
Balance carried forward to the next	4,898

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in their reception year is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is of a consistently good quality. As a result, the children are given a good start to their education.
- Children achieve well. All are well placed to attain the early learning goals before the end of their reception year in the six areas of learning.
- Children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Being with older Year 1 pupils helps.
- Relationships with parents are very good. Parents and staff are genuine partners in the children's education.
- The Foundation Stage co-ordinator has a clear commitment to high-quality care and high achievement for each child. She has a very clear overview of provision and is a very effective model for teaching.
- The support provided by the teaching assistant is excellent.
- Good use is made of the outdoor learning area.

Commentary

35 The Foundation Stage covers the period when children are in the reception class. At the time of the inspection, there were 18 children in their reception year, 11 boys and seven girls. They share the class with seven Year 1 pupils. The accommodation is good for all of these pupils. The well resourced outdoor area is used effectively to add challenge and interest to children's learning experiences. It also takes pressure off the available indoor area, giving children more space for activities. For example, it was used effectively during the inspection for children to explore a range of musical instruments, allowing them to make as much sound as they wanted for as long as they wanted!

36 Children's attainment on entry to the school is typical with the full range of ability represented. The teacher and teaching assistant work very effectively as a team ensuring consistent, high quality provision. Planning is carefully structured and fully meets the learning needs of all children, including those who have special educational needs and higher ability children. A particularly effective strategy adopted by the class teacher is to separate the two age groups under the supervision of either herself or the senior teaching assistant. Work is then carefully planned and closely matched to the age and ability of the children and they gain further benefit from working within a much smaller group. Children in reception benefit from being with older pupils as lesson introductions are usually with the whole class and rounding off sessions at the end give all the chance to see what others have been doing. Assessment procedures are good. Staff carefully monitor the children's achievements and the information gathered is used effectively to set the next targets for learning.

37 Parents are warmly welcomed by staff and a few regularly help within the classroom or filing children's work. This helps to provide a very favourable child to adult ratio, adding to the quality of provision.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher and teaching assistant have a very good understanding of the needs and interests of young children and ensure that they feel safe and secure.

- Staff are very good role models through what they say and do.
- Routines are well established so that the children know what is expected of them. This results in very good relationships and behaviour.
- Staff listen carefully to what the children have to say and provide many opportunities for them to speak. This effectively promotes their confidence and language development.
- A carefully planned balance between adult support and self-choice activities, results in the children developing good independent learning skills.

Commentary

38 The children are eager to learn and attentive. They settle quickly and happily to the wide range of activities provided. They are very well behaved and many are quite mature in their relationships and attitudes. Most are very willing to take on responsibilities. For example, all take care to tidy areas such as the outdoor area before moving to another activity. The children are confident and quite willing to talk about what they are doing and ask and answer questions. Independence skills are promoted well, for example, through being given the freedom to choose activities. Children are mostly mature for their age and have no difficulty in sharing resources or taking their turn.

39 Very effective sessions called 'circle time' involve children in thinking about and discussing qualities such as kindness. Through these activities they learn to consider and respect one another's feelings. In the session observed, children were encouraged to describe how they had helped to make Mother's Day a special day at home.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many interesting activities are planned and provided for the children to speak, listen, read and write about.
- Activities are exciting and stimulating and are planned very effectively to capture the children's interest.
- A love of books and the systematic development of reading skills are carefully planned and children achieve well in this area of learning. There is obviously much support from home in for reading.
- Children are provided with many opportunities to understand about writing as a method of communication and to develop their writing skills as they move through the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

40 Lessons are interesting and frequently fun and exciting. As a result, children quickly develop confident speaking skills due to the close attention of adults. For example, when making spells, the teacher encouraged children to describe how the interesting assortment of ingredients felt as they loaded them into the cauldron. Frog spawn jelly with currants set into it was a favourite. All then wrote and recited a spell which would turn their teaching assistant into a black cat. Amazingly the spells worked as the senior teaching assistant appeared meowing with whiskers, ears and a tail, much to the amusement of all. Most children have enough confidence to share their news with the rest of the class each morning. Class discussions at the end of lessons give good opportunities for the children to explain what they have been doing. However, some of these were rushed as activities had carried on for too long. A particular strength of the provision lies in the reception teacher's skills in responding to individual children. Plenty of time is given and each child knows that he or she is special and will be listened to.

41 Reading skills are promoted very well through many opportunities to respond to stories and other written text. The classroom is attractively decorated with large colourful displays of favourite

stories such as 'The Three Little Pigs'. All enjoy using and listening to the good range of story tapes. In the reading area, children enjoy 'reading' the attractive collection of books.

42 The large majority of children are already well on the way to achieving the early writing targets before the end of their reception year. Evidence from work completed so far confirms the high standards being achieved with most forming letters well. All activities are under the close supervision of adults who encourage the use of the phonic sound of the letters to help children to spell correctly. Children are given lots of practice as they write spells, list the ingredients for the witch's cauldron and write letters to Penguin Small, a character from one of their stories.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Mathematics is made purposeful and enjoyable through a wide range of play activities.
- Mathematical skills and language are systematically taught.

Commentary

43 Most children achieve well and are on course to attain the learning goals in this area before the end of reception as all are already confident with numbers to 20. The teacher plans activity sessions well. Children have good opportunities to consolidate their number sense as they play dice games, use money and make number jigsaws. In the two sessions seen, children were comparing distances in terms of longer or shorter and measuring objects around the classroom. When using sand or water, children count as part of their experimentation. As they prepared the witches spell, all naturally counted various ingredients, enjoying using numbers. Computers are frequently used to consolidate children's knowledge of numbers and vocabulary such as 'more' or 'less'.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are provided with a wide range of carefully planned and stimulating activities. This builds well on their previous experiences and helps them achieve well.
- The development of technical language is carefully planned into activities.
- Computer skills are taught effectively and this enables the children to become more independent and confident as they use the mouse confidently to work through a range of programs.
- Good use is made of the outside environment, both in school and in the wider locality.

Commentary

44 Children achieve well in this area of learning and all are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals before the end of their reception year. Computers are always available and programs are well prepared to help the children develop ICT skills or to reinforce learning. For example, children locate the places Barnaby Bear travels to or choose clothes for clowns.

45 Children use accurate terminology well to describe the different parts of their body and describe their plant growing experiments. All are able to sort toys by their age, describe the dangers of electricity in the home and know the benefits of keeping clean and a healthy lifestyle. In one very good lesson on sound, children made their own musical instruments after playing with a wide selection provided by their teacher. All enjoyed plucking, shaking, banging and scraping the instruments before choosing which type to make for themselves. The highlight of the lesson,

making learning fun, was walking as a band around the school playground and playing their instrument. Cross curricular links are planned well by the teacher and are a strong feature as children learn to take turns with special instruments, use scissors and a variety of joining techniques to create their own and decorate them.

46 Outdoor activities, such as the cauldron for mixing spells and large growbags for plants are very well planned to ensure that the children are provided with exciting and stimulating opportunities which encourage them to use their senses. Not only do they explore their senses but they develop and use language effectively to describe their feelings, and what they see, taste and hear.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children attain the learning goals before the end of their reception year. Some do particularly well in the development of skills that require finer, more precise movements such as using scissors and pencil control.
- Children are given time to explore in activities in the classrooms and through the provision of regular opportunities to play and learn outside in the well organised outdoor area.
- The indoor and outside learning environments are well resourced.

Commentary

47 Children achieve well and quickly develop skills in running, climbing and controlling a range of wheeled toys. Skills, such as cutting out shapes and controlling pencils, crayons and brushes are well developed as most children have attended pre-school nursery groups. In one physical education lesson seen where reception children worked with Year 1 pupils, all concentrated exceptionally well when responding to music and creating a sequence of movements related to the story about Penguin Small. All children showed great confidence when performing their 'Friendship dance' which was part of the long sequence they developed during the lesson.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children are provided with quality time to experiment, communicate, be imaginative and discover things for themselves.
- A good balance between adult involvement and independence results in children confidently building up their skills and being able to make their own choices.
- Good quality resources and exciting role-play areas encourage the children to relate well to others as they develop language, imagination and practical skills.

Commentary

48 Activities, such as the Animal Hospital corner are imaginative and enjoyable. The children enjoy singing and joining in with the actions for songs. Resources for drawing and painting are good and they are used extensively to promote children's creativity. In one lesson seen, children explored different painting techniques such as using a cloth to paint a background for their pictures of penguins. Outdoors, all enjoyed dropping a tennis ball dipped in white paint onto a black sheet to create a snow scene. The outline of the penguin was made using their fingers dipped in black paint. In other sessions, children were provided with good opportunities to decide what they were going to use to decorate their musical instruments or the new monsters they were making for the witch, for example. Their artistic talents were also challenged as they created their own individual Easter garden with plants and rocks. The close attention of an adult meant that they were fully engaged in

conversation about what they were doing. Role-play opportunities are carefully planned to provide opportunities for the children to develop their imagination and to relate to the wider world.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils achieve very well because they are given many opportunities to practise newly learned skills across other subjects.
- Teaching and learning are very good in Years 5 and 6. However, the quality varies significantly lower down the school and is marred in some lessons by tasks that are too easy for many pupils. Overall, it is good.
- Reading has high priority in the school and parents encouragement and support is valued.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good.
- Pupils use their grammatical knowledge well in writing, but in junior classes they are less secure about spelling strategies.
- The quality of handwriting and presentation of some work in English is not as good as it could be.
- Leadership of the subject is good.

Commentary

49 Standards are above average when compared to national levels of attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 in writing, speaking and listening. This good standard is a result of the way teachers throughout the school use English to support learning in other subject areas. In reading, standards are well above average in Year 2 and in Year 6. Since the previous inspection standards have improved in Year 2 and there have been significant improvements at the end of Year 6.

50 Teachers use their good knowledge of national strategies to ensure that skills are taught to pupils in a systematic way. This was evident in Year 2 where teachers support pupils in understanding the long 'i' sound and how it is represented differently in English words. They share objectives with pupils so all are clear about what they are going to learn and what is expected of them. As a result, pupils make good gains in their knowledge and develop their literacy skills well. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make very good progress. In this class the teacher uses resources particularly well, for example, the illustrations from the poem *Lucy Gray* inspires pupils to write what they think the poem is about. The teacher in this class challenges all pupils. Consequently they have a very good work ethic and see a clear sense of purpose in all they do.

51 The school gives great emphasis to reading and allocates time each day for pupils to read for pleasure. Parental support for reading at home is significant and this is undoubtedly helping pupils of all ages to achieve the high standards which they do. The library is well stocked and parents volunteer to help pupils change their books each week. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about books and read an extensive range. They use good strategies to decode new words and clearly understand inference in text. In discussions with pupils it is clear that teachers encourage pupils to be diverse in their choices of literature. Some choose poetry, others non-fiction texts as well as stories. Many have favourite authors.

52 Pupils throughout the school are good listeners in lessons. They gain in confidence in speaking in front of the whole school during 'Celebration Assembly'. The youngest children are supported to speak out so by the time they reach Year 6, they are very confident. In Year 5 and 6 where teaching is very good, there is a very good balance between teacher input and pupil discussion. This means that everyone gets the chance to talk through their ideas with a partner and share them with the whole class. This has a very positive effect on the quality of pupils' writing because through speaking their ideas audibly, they learn to use expressive vocabulary and alter

their sentences and phrases before writing them down. For example, in one English lesson, pupils contributed adjectives to describe a room in a cottage and ended with the imaginative phrase ‘a gloomy, dull and basic room’.

53 Writing standards are good but the school is never complacent and is actively seeking to improve them. The school improvement plan clearly identifies the action it is taking to ensure that standards remain high. Careful scrutiny of pupils’ writing shows convincingly that it is technically accurate and pupils have learned the basics of grammar and punctuation, although spelling is weaker in the two junior classes. This is because the new spelling scheme has been introduced into the school quite recently and its impact shows in pupils’ work from Year 1 to Year 3. The continued development of writing, therefore, will depend for its success on the extent to which pupils improve their spelling and the way teachers follow the good example in Years 5 and 6 to encourage more adventurous spoken vocabulary in all classes.

54 Pupils work is not presented well enough. Older pupils do not date their work nor do they consistently underline titles and headings. The school has recently adopted a handwriting scheme in order to address this area. There is evidence of improvements in the two infant classes, but less so in junior classes.

55 The co-ordinator is experienced and knowledgeable and is quite clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. She has had opportunities to monitor teaching and learning and has taken measures to introduce new handwriting and spelling schemes into the school and especially in infant classes. She has arranged a series of self-delivery in-service programmes for teachers. This includes trying out different approaches to the teaching of spelling. The impact is already noticeable as pupils demonstrate some good strategies for spelling unfamiliar words. The school has also adopted a new reading scheme and the impact here is very strong as reading standards are high.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56 This school is very skilled at using other areas of its curriculum for pupils to practise and consolidate the skills they learn in their literacy lessons. Their reading skills support their work in other subjects such as history when researching information in books or on the computer. There is no excessive use of worksheets and pupils have ample opportunities to write from scratch, using technical language in lessons such as history, geography and science.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well and attain above average standards throughout the school as they did in the previous inspection.
- Pupils’ behaviour is very good - they work hard in lessons.
- Pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and this slows their progress in some lessons.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Procedures for assessment are good.
- The subject is monitored and evaluated regularly, ensuring any weaknesses are detected quickly.
- Good use is made of computers in most lessons.

Commentary

57 The standards achieved last year by pupils in Year 6 in the national tests for 11 year-olds were well below average when compared to all schools and to the performance of pupils in similar schools. In the national tests for seven-year-olds, standards were above average for all schools and in line for similar schools. However, the number taking the tests in each group is small and so

the effect of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs has a dramatic effect on the overall performance. The schools own detailed analysis of last year's results for Year 6 showed that four pupils, some of whom were on the special educational needs register just failed to attain the expected level. This resulted in the disappointing performance.

58 Inspection evidence shows that standards for the current Year 2 and Year 6 are above average, showing that standards have been maintained since the previous inspection where they were also above average. All pupils in Year 2 are on course to achieve the expected Level 2 with a third achieving at the higher Level 3. In the current Year 6, all pupils are set to achieve the national standard with a third attaining the higher Level 5.

59 In lessons most pupils concentrate extremely well and their behaviour is usually very good. However, the quality of teaching varies and this adversely affected some pupils' concentration and effort. The best teaching was seen with Year 5 and 6 pupils. In a very good lesson on calculating areas and the perimeter of regular and irregular shapes, pupils were kept interested and on task throughout by the challenging work, the use of the new computer linked whiteboard and the sheer pace of the lesson with strict time targets to finish work. However, lower down the school, there was a distinct lack of challenge in some of the work set for pupils. In Year 2, for example, pupils easily completed simple addition sums and some pupils in Year 3 and 4 lost interest and started to shuffle about when they quickly finished their work on recognising simple fractions.

60 Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well. This is because their needs have been carefully assessed. They have clear mathematics targets to meet in their individual plans and teachers plan work that is adapted to take account of these. Pupils are very well supported by teaching assistants who demonstrate a high level of professional expertise. They help pupils to join in fully in class lessons and guide them sensitively during group sessions. More able pupils also achieve well over time. However, in some of the lessons seen, they showed remarkable patience as they waited for other pupils to finish their work, rather than being able to move on themselves to tackle additional work which would suitably challenge them.

61 The quality of teaching and learning are good, overall. Assessment is thorough and the results are used well to provide pupils' own individual targets and to plan future work. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the numeracy strategy and are able to provide very clear demonstrations and explanations and help pupils to see number patterns and different ways to arrive at the same answer. They encourage pupils to explore a range of strategies to solve problems. Particularly effective are the mental and oral sessions at the beginning of lessons and pupils are usually accurate in mental calculations. Correct mathematical vocabulary is always used and teachers ensure pupils understand and use this naturally. The very good relationships between adults and pupils mean that there is a very pleasant atmosphere for learning in all classes. Pupils enjoy their work, work hard and gain in confidence as well as achieving above average standards.

62 The experienced co-ordinator has a good grasp of the subject's strengths and has identified how to develop it further by providing information about strengths and weaknesses following monitoring visits to mathematics lessons as they are taught. The level of improvement since the previous inspection has been good. All areas for development raised in the previous report such as a scheme of work, marking and assessment have been successfully addressed. The progress made by all pupils is carefully tracked. This tracking clearly shows a dip in pupils performance in the middle of the school. It reflects the teachers' low expectations of what pupils can do the lack of sufficiently demanding work in lessons. There is a good range of software and computers are used well to support numeracy in most lessons.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63 Teachers are very good at identifying links between different areas of the curriculum. The use of mathematical skills is evident in design and technology, where pupils measure and weigh accurately, and science, where pupils present results in graphs and tables.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a very good attitude towards the subject and enjoy doing experiments and investigations.
- Pupils achieve above average standards by Year 2 and Year 6.
- Assessment procedures are good.
- Management of the subject is good.
- The range of computer programs is limited and computer linked sensors need up-grading.

Commentary

64 Although only two science lessons were seen, there was a wealth of evidence from national test results, pupils completed work, science displays in classrooms and teachers' detailed planning files to make secure judgements about standards and the quality of teaching and learning. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 have been maintained since the previous inspection when they were above average.

65 Pupils' overall performance in the national tests for Year 6 over the past four years is consistently in line with the national average. This is an achievement considering the small numbers taking the tests and the impact one or two pupils with special educational needs has on the overall results. All Year 6 pupils are expected to attain the standards expected this year with 40 per cent attaining at the higher Level 5. In the teacher assessments for Year 2 in 2003, the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher Level 3 was very high, being in the top five per cent nationally with nine of the twelve pupils achieving at this level. Almost all achieved the expected level. The current Year 2 pupils are on course to maintain the above average standards with all except those on the special educational needs register attaining expected levels and a third achieving the higher Level 3. There is no difference in the performance of girls and boys. Detailed assessment records show that all pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress as they move through the school.

66 The emphasis on a practical approach in all classes offers pupils a wide range of well-planned learning opportunities as they conduct experiments or investigations themselves. In the two lessons seen, pupils enjoyed conducting investigations, working sensibly in small groups. There was little additional challenge for more able pupils in one lesson seen and those of average ability found the task enjoyable but very easy, quickly completing their measurement of forces. Often they have to draw on skills from other areas of the curriculum. In a Year 3 and 4 class lesson on the effect of friction and the force needed to move an object, pupils had to predict the outcome before measuring the force required. Mathematical skills and their knowledge of computer programs were needed as they entered data and produced a bar graph of the results. Year 5 and 6 conducted an investigation into the way different household products would dissolve, first in cold water and then in hot water. All maintained their level of concentration well and showed an interest in their work. Discussions at the end of the lesson led to further studies being planned to determine the effect of the temperature of the water on the amount of the substance that is dissolved.

67 The scrutiny of work showed that all aspects of the curriculum are covered in some depth and that pupils in all classes have lots of opportunity to conduct experiments or investigations for themselves. There were records of pupils' attempts to separate materials, for example, and investigations involving exercise and heart rate, electrical circuits and friction. All pupils cover topics on health and growth and on growing plants. Pupils work hard and obviously take pride in their work, which was mostly neatly presented. All have a good understanding of fair testing.

68 The quality of teaching and learning is variable but overall it is good. Low expectations in some lessons are evident from the standard of work completed. Teachers make good use of the extra adults in the classroom to ensure that groups are well supported. The support available for

pupils with special educational needs is good and as a result, these pupils are able to work alongside other pupils and complete the work expected of them. Teachers' planning is good. It ensures that lessons are interesting, enjoyable and usually challenging for pupils of all ability levels.

69 The subject is well led and managed. The above average standards pupils achieve in the national tests and the quality of the work they produce each term are assessed rigorously. The school maintains detailed records of each pupils' attainment and progress as they move through the school and these show clearly the gains each pupil makes. By Year 6, pupils performance in relation to their prior attainment at Year 2 is above average. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is undertaken by the headteacher and co-ordinator and this has highlighted the need for more computer programs and computer-linked sensors. However, records of monitoring visits are not sufficiently detailed and do not highlight areas for further improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been recent improvement in resources.
- Staff expertise has improved but some teachers make better use of computers than others in lessons.
- Direct teaching of ICT skills is used throughout the school day through a cross-curricular approach.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By Year 6 they use computers confidently and benefit from a good range of resources including software.
- Procedures for effectively monitoring and evaluating provision are not established.

Commentary

70 By Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' ICT skills are at the expected level as they were at the time of the previous report. Pupils' level of achievement is satisfactory. Computers are all class based and there are sufficient for a group of pupils to use. Information and communication technology features strongly in the school due to the interest and expertise of the headteacher and the subject co-ordinator. Resources are substantial and the school is taking part in a national pilot study for the new computer linked interactive white boards. The school already has two boards and another two are due shortly so all classes will be well resourced.

71 Since the previous inspection national funding has meant that the resources for the subject have been improved and staff confidence and expertise developed through training. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are good role models and some use computer generated presentations during lessons. For example in Years 5 and 6 the teacher used a presentation to teach pupils about the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb. Pupils will subsequently make their own presentations. In Years 3 and 4 the teacher uses the interactive white board to record pupils' ideas and is able to go back to previous suggestions at the press of a button.

72 Pupils thoroughly enjoy working with computers. Teachers use computers satisfactorily throughout the school day making sure that pupils use ICT to support their work. However, in some lessons, the class computers were not used at all. By the end of Year 2, pupils use word processing to write and punctuate sentences and use line breaks accurately when writing poetry. They make pictures filling in the outlines and in art and design lessons they have used the computer to create work in the style of Mondrian. Year 6 pupils demonstrate basic skills of logging on, saving, printing and amending their work well. They learn to use interactive display boards with confidence. They produce multi-media presentations linked to other subject areas such as history. They use graphics, organise data, for example, on the way the River Nile floods during the different months of the year. Planning shows they record sensor data, but the school is experiencing some difficulties in resources for this aspect at present as some of the older computers need replacing. Two classes already have the latest interactive display boards and these will be installed in all classes shortly.

Pupils confidently use web sites to research information about historical people and famous events. Year 6 pupils are well aware of the advantages of using computers in the home and office and are alive to the dangers posed by computer viruses and allowing children unsupervised access to chat rooms.

73 The subject leader has good expertise and supports staff where necessary. Assessment procedures have been revised and pupils are assessed at the end of each key stage. A record of the work of each pupil work is being assembled by some class teachers, although this good practice is not consistent in the school. Monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject are not developed to ensure that best use is made of resources and that pupils are provided with opportunities to use computers as part of their learning in as many lessons as possible.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74 ICT is used more effectively by some teachers more than others to support teaching and learning in other areas of the curriculum. Examples of work seen in other subjects are word processing in English, testing numeracy skills in mathematics, databases in science and research in history and geography. In a Year 3 science lesson, for example, pupils were able to produce bar graphs showing the amount of force needed to move an object over different surfaces. In the Year 5 and 6 class, the new interactive display board was used to display regular and irregular shapes for pupils to calculate the area and perimeter of each. Teachers also use ICT to support their own work, for example, to produce worksheets and print labels for class displays. They make very good use of the school's digital camera to record visits and school activities.

HUMANITIES

75 Only one **Geography** lesson was seen and so an overall judgement about the quality of provision is possible. Evidence was gathered by looking at displays and pupils' books and by talking with them about their work. Pupils say they enjoy the subject. In the one lesson seen standards were at the expected level. Pupils throughout the school produce a great amount of work that is well supported by other subject areas, such as mathematics and literacy. Their work includes a range of diagrams and illustrations to help improve pupils' knowledge and understanding. In Year 2, there are good links between geography and literacy as pupils learn about the physical features of a fictional island in Scotland from the stories of Katie Morag. Activities are interesting and develop pupils' basic subject skills well. For example, they learn to use mapping symbols so 'Jack' can find his way to the giant's castle. An Indian Village is studied in Years 3 and 4 and pupils compare climate, transport and lifestyles with those of Britain. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is further developed in Years 5 and 6 when they plan model towns and increase their knowledge by examining maps of Europe and the world. The subject is further enhanced through a good range of visits within the locality, for example, pupils go to see the flood defences at Appleby-in-Westmorland and when they go on residential visits within the nearby Lake District to see interesting land features.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good standards have been maintained because history has a high profile in the school.
- There is good use of ICT to support learning.
- The subject benefits from a cross-curricular approach.
- The quality of teaching varies throughout the school. In some lessons, pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- Procedures to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning are currently unsatisfactory.

Commentary

76 Standards in history are at the expected level at the end of Year 2 and they are above the expected level by the end of Year 6. History has a high profile in the school and it is clear from discussions with pupils during lessons that they enjoy their work. Pupils talk with equal enthusiasm about the Vikings and the Saxons and clearly remember the work they did on the ship found at Sutton Hoo. Teaching is good overall because pupils are given plenty of chances to engage in their own research on aspects of the topic they choose. However, in one lesson seen, the quality of teaching was only just satisfactory as the introduction lasted too long and the task given was not sufficiently demanding for higher attaining pupils. Teachers plan a good range of visits and visitors come to the school to enhance historical knowledge. Pupils have visited the Viking settlement, Jorvik in York and Eden Camp when learning about World War II. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop an understanding about the passage of time when learning about the Ancient Greeks and here the teacher makes satisfactory use of video presentations to interest them.

77 Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 particularly enjoy their own research through the web site and through books. In very good lessons teachers use computer-generated presentations in history very well. For example, pupils watched and listened intently to discover, for example, what Carter actually saw when he first entered the tomb of Tutankhamen. They were particularly enthralled to discover that the young king may have been murdered.

78 A good feature of the history curriculum is that the topics planned by teachers develop pupils' skills and knowledge in English and ICT. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 examine the diary of Howard Carter in English lessons, while learning about the discovery of King Tutankhamen's tomb in history. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 find out about the concept of legends and myths when learning about the Ancient Greeks. This means that pupils have opportunities to practise many skills at the same time as they widen their historical knowledge and understanding.

79 Management of the subject is satisfactory overall and the level of improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Schemes of work covering all year groups have been successfully developed and the latest national guidance for history has been adopted by the school. Assessment procedures have been improved and are now satisfactory. Pupils' progress and attainment is assessed at the end of each topic. However, procedures to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning with a view to bringing about further improvements are unsatisfactory at present. The co-ordinator is not given the time to properly evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in order to ensure that all teaching is of the same high quality with pupils being sufficiently challenged and interested in all lessons.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

80 Few lessons were seen in the subjects in this section, so no judgements about the overall quality of provision were made. Evidence was gathered from the lessons observed, talking to pupils, examining teachers planning and a scrutiny of pupils completed work.

81 It is evident that **art and design** still has a high profile in the school. In the previous inspection, standards were judged to be well above average. Pupils say they enjoy the subject and find it relaxing and pleasurable. In the one lesson seen, standards were above the expected level. This is because the school gives good emphasis to teaching pupils the skills they need. Pupils are given a broad range of activities to enable them to experience different media and techniques that reflect the school's scheme of work and national guidance. In sketchbooks, for example, Year 2 pupils draw portraits and facial features have good detail in ears, eyelashes and eyebrows. Pupils use a good range of textured fabric, plastic and leather to make a whole class collage of a sun-blind. They draw mirror images of African masks or Aztec ornaments. In Years 5 and 6, pupils develop their skills and techniques and their drawings become more detailed and complex when drawing scenes from 'Lord of the Rings' or when copying the work of famous artists. They make tiles in relief copying the work of Van Gogh. Displays show they represent flowers through three-dimensional collage, relief work, marbling, tapestry and printing. This gives a good sense of purpose to the work that pupils produce.

82 **Design and technology** lessons are carefully planned using national guidelines and topics have been devised to ensure that skills are taught in a systematic way so that pupils have opportunities to develop their ideas through investigation and making. Pupils say they enjoy design and technology and recently made toys with moving mechanisms. They learn to use handsaws, drills and glue guns safely. Pupils design their ideas in sketchbooks and write the resources they need. They have opportunities to discuss their work and evaluate what they have made. Sometimes they change their designs in light of problems they encounter. Pupils talk with competence about their work and show an awareness of properties of different materials. In a good lesson in Year 2 pupils were sewing fabric together to make a patchwork coat for 'Joseph'. They learnt how to pin a template to fabric and then cut it out. Pupils are well supported by teaching assistants and parent volunteers. Good use is made of the computer to help pupils design patterns. Pupils have already made a stunning sun-blind for the class with leaves attached in various ways. They have also made a range of finger puppets and hand puppets using simple but effective ideas.

83 In **music**, only one lesson was seen. Standards in music were below expectations in the previous inspection. The subject leader has worked hard to improve provision and the school now has a scheme of work in place to support the non-specialist teachers. As a result, class teachers plan lessons that help pupils build on the skills they have learnt previously. In the one lesson seen, the teacher helped pupils develop their listening skills so they were able to identify sounds played on percussion instruments of wooden, metal and leather materials. Recorded music and songs were carefully chosen to match the skills being taught. There are good links to design and technology and pupils in Year 2 have made their own shakers filling them with a variety of pulses to create different sounds.

84 The school employs a specialist teacher to work with classes each week. In lessons pupils say they learn to compose and play short pieces on percussion instruments and sing songs from different cultures. The profile of music is being raised in the school with pupils from Years 5 and 6 taking part in the Jazz Festival at Keswick. They sing Christmas songs in a large shop during the festive period. Some pupils benefit from keyboard, piano and brass instrument lessons each week, given by peripatetic teachers and at the end of each term these pupils perform for the school during assembly. At Christmas time pupils perform for parents and the elderly in the community. Pupils sing songs linked to the theme; some sing solos and others duets.

85 The quality of provision in **physical education** was a concern for some parents at their meeting with inspectors before the inspection. A few parents felt pupils' choices of sporting activities were limited and there were concerns about the small size of the school hall. Inspectors agree that the size of the hall is small and likely to cause problems when used by larger junior classes. There is no space for vertical climbing apparatus for example, and movement is further restricted by stored items such as the piano. An analysis of teachers' planning shows that the school staff work hard to successfully provide a wide range of activities, including adventurous activities on residential visits. A detailed scheme of work has been introduced since the previous inspection and it closely follows the latest national guidance. Statutory requirements for physical education are met.

86 Only two lessons were seen, one in Year 2 and the other with reception children. Year 2 pupils concentrated well as they learnt the steps for a country dance. Boys and girls were equally enthusiastic and worked well together. In reception, children successfully remembered a sequence of actions based on the story about 'Penguin small' and performed these to music. Teachers' planning shows that the full physical education curriculum is adequately covered. Swimming provision is good. Pupils in both junior classes travel to use the swimming pool in the feeder secondary school for ten sessions over two terms. This ensures that all have time to gain the required standards. The school reports that all pupils attain the expected level of competence before they leave in Year 6.

87 The subject co-ordinator has brought about a satisfactory level of improvement to aspects such as teachers' planning and assessment since the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment and progress are assessed carefully at the end of each term with satisfactory procedures. However, procedures to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning are currently inadequate. As a

result, the quality of teaching in individual lessons is not assessed and the school does not know how successful teachers are in their efforts to compensate for the lack of space indoors. The playground is suitable for the small numbers and pupils of all ages enjoy using the adventure climbing equipment. The range and quality of extra-curricular sporting activities is good for such a small school. All junior pupils have the chance to represent the school in competitive events such as netball and football matches. There is also the opportunity for Year 5 and 6 pupils to take part in a residential experience with adventurous activities such as orienteering and canoeing and younger pupils to stay at Lakeland youth hostels and to go fell walking.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHCE)

Provision in personal, social, health education and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between pupils and their teachers in this small school are very good.
- Pupils behave very well and there is a very good atmosphere for learning in most lessons.

Commentary

88 School assemblies make a significant contribution to the provision for pupils' PSHCE. The previous inspection reported a Christian ethos which pervaded the school, stemming from the caring family atmosphere and sense of community, generated through assemblies. This is still the case today as pupils listen attentively to stories such as the 'Yoyo Man'. Following the story, they discuss the importance of telling the truth and debate which is worse, lying or stealing. Teachers and all staff are very good role models for pupils and the very close and caring relationship pupils of all ages have with their teachers gives them the confidence to contribute.

89 In Year 2, pupils sat in a circle around their teacher discussing all the things which make us the same and then all those which make us different. In the reception class, children described what they had done to make Mother's Day special and this was expertly developed into a discussion about being kind. This effectively encourages pupils' thinking about other people, helping them to be more aware of people's feelings and to be more tolerant. During the year, pupils have good opportunities to develop an understanding of different world faiths and to appreciate the customs associated with other religions. The quality of provision is enhanced by the very good attitudes of pupils and the close and trusting relationships they enjoy with all staff. In the pupil questionnaire, for example, all pupils under six and 96 per cent of those over seven agreed that they had an adult to go to in school if they were worried.

90 The development of the provision for PSHCE is having a significant impact on pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school in general and towards one another in particular. Pupils behave in a mature and responsible way in school and this helps to create the very good atmosphere for learning seen in most lessons. Pupils' views are regularly sought and pupils of all ages are elected to serve on the school pupil council, further promoting their sense of responsibility.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).